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## The social and spatial thresholds of the BBC Big Screens

Mediating Heritage: The creative use and re-use of cultural inheritance

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## Thresholds

- Live site: threshold between Big Screen - Community
- Extend physical thresholds with digital technologies
- Timely!
- BBC withdrawing 1<sup>st</sup> April
- Reconsidering purpose, funding model & ambitions
  
- LAs Big Screen Officers
- BBC Big Screen managers
- Collaborators with the BBC Big Screen
- Individuals working in the vicinity

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## Participatory thresholds

The threshold participants have to overcome before they engage

- Public: glance, shallow engagement, active engagement
- Individuals working in the vicinity
- Collaborators



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## Spatial thresholds

### Live site

- BBC screen – surrounding public space – access points
- Spatial aspects influence participation
  - civic vs. residential
  - temporal patterns of inhabitation
- Nature of space
  - Galleries without walls?



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## Social thresholds

Responsibility divided between BBC – LA

- Events & content of the screen
- **Animate screen for local community**
- Disseminate
- Educate
  - policies & procedures
  - suitability of material
  - editorial
  - technical requirements
- Technical maintenance



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## Renegotiating thresholds

What lies ahead?

- Implications for ambitions, purpose, editorial control, funding model, management
- London 2012 – BBC – LAs 33.3% to ???
- How will the LAs and the community cope?
  - Financial challenges
  - Technical challenges
  - Editorial challenges
- Commercial advertising and media companies?
- LAs as political bodies? Impartiality?
- Community groups would suffer



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## Measuring value

### From quantitative to qualitative

- Attendance figures
  - transient nature
  - size of city and budget
- Stories of building relationships with the community
  - working with young people
  - supporting creative journey
  - improve career prospects
  - broadcast experience
  - re-inhabitation of the city centre
- Business revenue for nearby businesses
- Valuable community resource

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## Valuing the network

### Re-evaluate Live site

- Extends beyond the physical boundaries
- Include collaborators in the creation of content
- Spatial and participatory thresholds
  - Across locality of collaborators
- Local community
  - spectators
  - participators
  - collaborators
- 'Gatekeepers' to the Live site
  - Providing technical expertise
  - Professional knowledge
  - Local connections

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## Further Qs: Gatekeepers and the social threshold

- To what extent can heritage institutions use digital technologies to mimic the role of gatekeeper and act as a point of exchange between content and community?
- What are the site requirements of an extended threshold space that suggest successful engagement of communities? What benefit does inhabitation of this threshold bring to heritage institutions?
- How can digital technologies extend the participatory, spatial and social threshold beyond the immediate vicinity of the heritage institution? How does this benefit institutions and participants?
- How will changes to the funding model, editorial policy and provision of programming and technical support alter engagement with local communities following the BBC's departure?